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Lexington, MA 02421

NHTSA-03-16128-41

Dr. Jeffrey W. Runge
National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration
400 7th St. SW
Washington, D.C. 20590

December 23, 2003

Dear Dr. Runge,

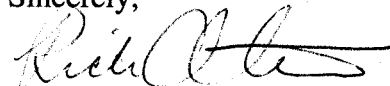
I was heartened to read that you are considering making changes to our national fuel economy standards. As a concerned citizen, I urge you to follow through on these changes, as well as on requirements for safer SUVs.

I am well aware that national decisions of this sort have to be weighed carefully for their impact on many competing aspects of our nation's welfare – jobs, the environment, and consumer desires to name a few. I believe that we have the technology now that would allow the nation's automobile manufacturers to make SUVs that are safer and get significantly improved gas mileage without seriously impacting the companies' ability to make a profit. As a consumer who would like to purchase an SUV for the many conveniences it offers but who has refused to do so for safety and environmental concerns, I would be happy to purchase such an automobile – and I believe there are many others like me.

One of the reasons that I love living in the United States is that our country has protected both our freedom of choice, and our country's natural resources. There can be little doubt that improving gas mileage in automobiles would be a significant step for future generations, as it would help to reduce emissions while simultaneously reducing our dependence on fossil fuels. As we have the technology to make these changes at a minimal cost, the consumer's desires are also protected.

I applaud you for considering these changes, as the pressures against making them must be significant. I urge you to think of future generations and the problems they will face if we do not begin to address these issues in a substantive way.

Sincerely,



Rick Atkins

NATIONAL HIGHWAY
TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMIN.

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DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF SAFETY